

Application No. 09/822,693
Amendment dated December 8, 2003
Reply to Office Action of August 8, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

Reflected in the listing of
claims that begins on page 3
of this paper.

Amendments to the Drawings:

None.

Remarks/Arguments:

Begin on page 7 of this paper.

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Claim Amendments

A complete list of all the presently or formerly pending claims in the application is provided below, with suitable headings to show the status of each claim.

Claim 1 (Original): A method of operating a solid polymer electrolyte fuel cell comprising:

supplying an oxidant reactant stream to the cathode electrode of said fuel cell;

supplying a fuel reactant stream to the anode electrode of said fuel cell;

monitoring a temperature parameter indicative of the operating temperature of said fuel cell; and

when said temperature parameter is below a predetermined threshold value, reactant starving at least a portion of one of said electrodes.

Claim 2 (Cancelled).

Claim 3 (Cancelled).

Claim 4 (Cancelled).

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Claim 5 (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said reactant starving is intermittent.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said reactant starving comprises interrupting the supply of one of said reactant streams to said respective fuel cell electrodes.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[5]]~~ 6 wherein said method comprises intermittently interrupting the supply of one of said reactant streams to said fuel cell electrodes.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[5]]~~ 6 wherein said one of said reactant streams is said fuel reactant stream.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[5]]~~ 6 wherein said one of said reactant streams is said oxidant reactant stream.

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Claim 10 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[5]]~~ 6
wherein said fuel cell is one of a plurality of fuel cells
arranged in a fuel cell stack.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[9]]~~ 10
wherein said supply of one of said reactant streams to each of
said plurality of fuel cells is not simultaneously interrupted.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method of claim 1
wherein said method comprises connecting a transient electrical
load to draw electrical power from said fuel cell.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[11]]~~ 12
wherein said method comprises intermittently connecting a
transient electrical load to draw electrical power from said fuel
cell.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[11]]~~ 12
wherein the rates of supply of said reactants to said fuel cell
electrodes are not increased in response to the connection of
said transient load.

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Claim 15 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[11]]~~ 12 wherein said fuel cell is one of a plurality of fuel cells arranged in a fuel cell stack, and the connection of said transient load to draw power from each one of said plurality of fuel cells is not simultaneous.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said reactant streams are essentially free of electrocatalyst poisons.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[15]]~~ 16 wherein said fuel reactant stream is substantially pure hydrogen.

Claim 18 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[4]]~~ 5 wherein said fuel cell is one of a plurality of fuel cells arranged in a fuel cell stack and said reactant starving causes a voltage reversal to occur in at least one of said plurality of fuel cells.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The method of claim ~~[[17]]~~ 12 wherein said fuel cell is one of a plurality of fuel cells arranged in a fuel cell stack and said reactant starving causes a

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voltage reversal to occur in at least one of said plurality of
fuel cells.